

A challenge to syntactic analyses of swiping: Investigating *wh-in situ* in Canadian French

This paper investigates swiping (sluiced *wh*-word inversion with prepositions in Northern Germanic (Merchant, 2002)) in Lafontaine French (LFF) (a dialect of French spoken in the relatively small community of Lafontaine in the Georgian Bay area of central Ontario, Canada), and its theoretical implications.

Swiping (1b) is an ellipsis process which only takes place in sluicing (1a):

- (1) a. Jack left, but I don't know *why*.
b. Jack left, but I don't know *who with*.

Standard analyses of sluicing (e.g. Merchant, 2001) derive (1a) by positing that *wh*-movement to Spec-CP licenses deletion of TP at PF. In swiping (1b), a preposition is pied-piped along with the sluiced *wh*-word, and there is an inversion between the preposition and *wh*-word. Merchant (2002) derives (1b) by positing head-to-head movement of the *wh*-word at PF, where the *wh*-word incorporates with the preposition, forming a complex head. Data from LFF, as in (2), shows that this phenomenon also exists in this dialect:

- (2) Il a voté, mais je ne sais pas *qui pour*. (LFF)
he has voted but I NEG know not who for
'He voted, but I don't know *who for*.'

In this account, I discuss the syntactic details of swiping in LFF. Swiping constructions in LFF are tested and I identify which *wh*-elements and prepositions are productive in LFF swiping constructions. I further discuss whether visible patterns or generalizations can be made regarding swiping constructions in LFF, and how these compare to what has been observed for English.

I show that the *wh*-phrases involved in acceptable swiping constructions are more restricted than in English, with differences existing in licit versus illicit prepositions in swiping in LFF in comparison to English. I demonstrate that current models relying on movement and deletion (e.g. van Craenenbroeck 2004, 2010; Hartman & Ai, 2009; Merchant, 2002; Murphy, 2016; Radford & Iwasaki, 2015) lack explanatory adequacy in accounting for LFF swiping. Immobile *wh*-phrases such as *quoi*, for instance, can only ever be used *in situ* in French, unless they are part of a PP. Nevertheless, the bare *wh*-phrase *quoi* can in fact be sluiced (3a), can front when complement to a preposition (3b), but this same frontable PP cannot undergo inversion to derive a swipe (3c).

- (3) a. Elle va lui donner quelque chose, mais *quoi*? (LFF)
she will him give some thing but what
'She's going to give him something, but what?'
b. Avec *quoi* a-t-il été tué?
with what has-he been killed
'With what was he killed?'
c. *Il m'a frappé, mais *quoi avec*?
he me.has struck but what with
'He struck me, but with what?'

Neither a proposal positing head movement at PF (Merchant 2002), nor proposals positing that the preposition is stranded in an intermediate projection (e.g. Hartman & Ai, 2009) can explain why an immobile *wh*-phrase like *quoi* can be sluiced but cannot undergo swiping in LFF. An analysis of LFF data shows that purely syntactic or semantic analyses cannot fully explain swiping in this dialect. This account argues that there is likely no exceptional *wh*-movement under sluicing and swiping, but rather a prosodic deletion of given material which has undergone dephrasing and is already prosodically reduced (e.g. Féry, 2001) derives these elliptical constructions, as in (4).

- (4) Il a voté, mais je ne sais pas [CP [*qui*]_i [TP ~~qu'il a voté pour~~ *t*_i].